



9,500-YEAR-OLD SUNKEN CITY FOUND OFF INDIAN COAST

An interview with Michael A. Cremona
by Linda Moulton Howe © 2002

February 16, 2002, Surat, India – A month ago in mid-January, marine scientists in India announced they had sonar images of square and rectangular shapes about 130 feet down, off the north-western coast of India in the Gulf of Khambhat (Cambay).

The Indian Minister of Science and Technology ordered that the site be dredged. What was found has surprised archaeologists around the world and was the subject of a private meeting two weeks ago, attended by the Indian Minister in charge of investigating the underwater site about 30 miles off the coast from Surat.

An American who travelled to that private meeting is Michael Cremona, researcher in the history of archaeology for the Bhaktivedanta Institute and author of the book, *Forbidden Archeology*. I talked with him today in India about the dredging operation, what the ocean engineers found and the implications of the first carbon-dating of artifacts at more than 9,000 years.

Michael Cremona (MC): Within the past few months, the engineers began some

dredging operations there and they pulled up human fossil bones, fossil wood, stone tools, pieces of pottery and many other things that indicated that it indeed was a human habitation site that they had. And they were able to do more intensive sonar work there and were able to identify more structures. These appear to have been laid out on the bank of a river that had been flowing from the Indian subcontinent out into that area.

Linda Moulton Howe (LMH): According to the news releases, they have done a radiocarbon testing on a piece of wood from the underwater site that is now yielding an age of 9,500 years, which would place it near the end of the last ice age.

MC: Yes, those are the indications that are coming.

There were actually two radiocarbon dates: one about 7,500 years old, and another about 9,500 years old. The 9,500-year-old one seems to be the stronger one. That's the one they are going with. This was announced by Minister Joshi [Murli Manohar Joshi is India's Minister for Ocean Technology] at this meeting I attended in Hyderabad, India. He said there is going to



The underwater archaeological site, which could be more than 9,000 years old, is about 30 miles west of Surat in the Gulf of Khambhat (Cambay) in northwestern India.

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

Devanāgarī	Arabic		
०	0	उ	ukāra
१	1	ऊ	ūkāra
२	2	ऋ	ṛkāra
३	3	ॠ	ṙkāra
४	4	ऌ	ḷkāra
५	5	ॡ	ekāra
६	6	ऒ	aikāra
७	7	ओ	okāra
८	8	औ	aokāra
९	9		
१०	10		

The most archaic Sanskrit (Devanagari) is that of the *Vedas*, multiple books written in thousands of hymns and verses arranged in song cycles. The *Vedas* say that "god-men" brought Sanskrit to "Earth-men" as a language of musical tones. Above, on the left, is a comparison of the numerals 1 through 10 in Devanagari Sanskrit compared to Arabic. On the right are some examples of Devanagari vowels and diphthongs. (Sources: *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, 1993; *Sanskrit Keys to the Wisdom Religion*, by Judith Tyberg © 1968)

be more work going on. It's difficult because it's very difficult to see down there. There is a very swift current. So it's going to have to be a pretty massive effort, but he said the government of India is willing to put the resources behind it to do whatever it takes to further confirm these discoveries.

I also spoke in Hyderabad with an independent archaeologist not connected with the Indian government but who has a deep interest in these discoveries, and he says they are still going to have to send divers down there. Up to this point, they have not sent divers down. The information they have is based on the sonar readings and the dredging they have done. Eventually, they are going to have to find a way to get people down there to take a closer look at this. I think this effort is going to go on.

Now, another American archaeologist, Richard Meadows of Harvard University, is proposing there should be an international

effort here. On the surface that sounds like a good idea, but it also may be an effort of American archaeologists and others to control the project. I don't think they want to see a civilisation being as old as it appears to be, according to these new finds dated at

9,500 years ago. So I would hope the Indian archaeologists and government would be very cautious about letting outsiders in there who might have a different agenda and who might try to control what gets let out about this very important discovery. It could be quite revolutionary.

LMH: What about the cultural background of people at the underwater site?

MC: Even if we don't know the cultural background of the people—if it does happen to be a city that is 9,500 years old, then that is older than the Sumerian civilisation by several thousand years. That is older than the Egyptian, older than the Chinese. So it would radically affect our whole picture of the development of urban civilisation on this planet.

Now, if it further happens that additional research is able to identify the culture of the people who lived in that city that's now underwater, if it turns out they are a Vedic people—which I think is quite probable, given the location of this off the coast of India—I think that would radically change the whole picture of Indian history, which has basically been written by Western archaeologists.

LMH: Is India's Vedic culture really older than 3,500 years?

MC: Ever since the 19th century, there has been a huge debate about the actual history of India. When the Europeans first came there, they noticed that the people in



Harappa archaeological dig in the Indus River valley, showing heights and depths of structures, many built on mounds at least 3,500 years ago. (Source: North Park University, Chicago, Illinois, USA)



Excavated walls of a Harappan city. (Source: North Park University, Chicago, Illinois)

river called the Saraswati that flowed from the Himalayan Mountains down to the Arabian Sea, down in that area of north-western India. And such a river doesn't exist there today. So, what happened was that people thought that therefore the *Rig Veda* could not be talking about India; it had to be talking about some other place outside of India where there was some kind of river.

But what happened a few years ago that is quite interesting is that archaeologists in India started studying the satellite photographs from American satellites, like *Landsat* had been providing, and they noticed there was a dry river channel that began up in the Himalayas—a huge river that went down almost to that Bay of Khambhat [Cambay] which we are talking about [the location of the underwater city site]. And then later, they found that on the banks of that river there were 800 to 1,000 urban sites, archaeological sites.

So, it does appear that what the *Rig Veda* was talking about—a mighty river lined with cities in India over 5,000 years ago—has to be true. The last time that river had water in it was over 5,000 years ago.

LMH: Is there a possibility that there could have been some sort of non-human cohabitation on the continent of India, let's say 50,000 years ago, that could explain all of the *Vedas*?

MC: Yes. In Kashmir, it appears that the valley of Kashmir was many years ago a lake. Now, there is an ancient Sanskrit

India who had the Sanskrit language as the main language of their literature...they noticed that the European languages were similar [in word concepts and roots], so that meant the Europeans and East Indians had to be related.

The 19th-century scientists also noticed that the Sanskrit culture—or Vedic culture as it is sometimes called, after the ancient Indian literature, the *Vedas*, which means "knowledge"—appeared to be older than the European cultures. (Sometimes the ancient Indian culture is called the Vedic culture or Vedic civilisation; the literature is called the Vedic literature.) So, since the European languages were related to the Indian language Sanskrit of the *Vedas*, that could only mean that the European peoples had to have come out of India somehow and then gone to Europe, their languages differentiating into Russian, English, Spanish, German and the rest of them. The European investigators didn't like that idea because it would have given the Vedic culture a position superior to their own.

So, these early cities in the Indus valley, like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, have been identified by archaeologists such as Richard Meadows and others as being non-Vedic. They think the Vedic culture came into India maybe 3,500 years ago.

LMH: Isn't that inconsistent with the concept in the *Vedas* of the Krishna character who comes and says the universe is teeming with life, who appears to have knowledge about other habitations in the cosmos, and who is talking from an age

that would go back at least 9,500 years?

MC: Oh, absolutely, Linda. In these ancient Sanskrit writings there is no hint at all that the culture came from anywhere else.

LMH: And if they are the prime source and if the Vedic literature can be taken literally, then it implies that there were cities there, inhabited at least several thousand years ago.

MC: Yes, and there has been other research going on in that area. For example, the *Rig Veda*, which is one of the earliest Vedic literatures, talks about a mighty



One of the mysterious white rings made of brick, which dot the landscape where the Harappan people lived. (Source: North Park University, Chicago, Illinois, USA)



These seals, found at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa in the Indus River valley in present-day Pakistan, have been dated to 2500 BC. (Source: North Park University, Chicago, Illinois)

manuscript that tells of a lake that existed in that area, so that account is there in some ancient writings. Now, according to modern geological reporting, about 40,000 years ago Kashmir was indeed a lake in the valley of Kashmir in northern India. It was covered by a huge lake and it was blocked on the southern end by a little range of mountains. And at a certain point, something happened and it broke open and the lake drained out. That happened about 40,000 to 50,000 years ago.

So, it is interesting that you've got this ancient historical record that talks about this lake. And if it is to be taken literally, then it means that somebody must have seen this lake as it existed 50,000 years ago and somebody wrote about it.

The Harappan Civilisation, circa 3000 – 1500 BC

Until the recent Bay of Khambhat discovery, two of the oldest advanced urban centres in India investigated by archaeologists were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, in present-day Pakistan along the Indus River. It remains to be seen if anything at the Bay of Khambhat site resembles the structures of the very ancient and mysterious Harappan civilisation.

The Harappan civilisation is one of the most mysterious cultures of the ancient

Indian world and existed more than 3,000 years ago. The people were literate and used the Dravidian Sanskrit language, only part of which has been deciphered today. The artifacts from Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus valley of Pakistan are extraordinary in beauty and detail.

Mysterious white rings, made of brick, dot the landscape where the Harappan people lived, but archaeologists do not know their function. One guess is that they were platforms for spreading and drying of grains.

The first objects to be unearthed from Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were small stone seals inscribed with

elegant depictions of animals, including a "unicorn-like" figure [see upper left of photograph at left, and close-up photograph below], and marked with Indus script writing which still baffles scholars. These seals are dated back to 2500 BC.

The seal of the "unicorn-like" animal found in Mohenjo-Daro measures 29 millimetres (1.14 inches) on each side and is made of heated steatite. Steatite is an easily carved soft stone that becomes hard after firing.

On the top of the seal are four pictographs of an as-yet-undeciphered Indus script, one of the first writing systems in history. — LMH

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Close-up of seal showing a "unicorn-like" animal, found at Mohenjo-Daro. At the top are glyphs which are yet to be deciphered. (Source: Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan)